[P. 102(B)]

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
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# APPENDIX III: ANTONIO SALDAÑA, LAST KING OF TALAMANCA

by Carlos Meléndez Ch.

643 648 capital of Costa Rica, in 1871, where he was cordially and sympathetically received by the authorities. This was due to two causes. The fact that he was handsome, intelligent, and cordial,[2] and to the geographical position of Talamanca which lay within the territory disputed by Nueva Granada and Costa Rica.

643 578 Lapis, the remaining king, could not tolerate the rise to power of Santiago. A feud began which terminated in the death of Lapis after he was forced to take refuge in the forest land. He left a heritage of hate to his friends and followers.

But the worries of Santiago were not over. Birche and Willie, who belonged to the *saLwak* [669] clan and were his cousins, commenced to conspire against him. In 1872, they surprised him by ambush and killed him. Birche remained master with Willie next in command. The incapacity of the first and the ambitions of the second soon created a situation in Talamanca which was difficult for the Costa Rican authorities to control.

643 648 [682] In 1864, Willie succeeded in assuming the power directly under Mr. Lyon. Six years later, however, the king was forced to flee across the range and become an outlaw because he committed murder and fought the national authorities.

643 As the post remained vacant, the nephew of Willie inherited it. Barely 20 years old, Antonio Saldaña became king.[3] His capital was • [644] Túnsula, not far from Sipurio on the Sixaola River, and was formed by one large house or "palenque" which differed very slightly from the other habitations.

Antonio's personality was very similar to that of Santiago, with all his attributes and

[2] Pérez Zeledón, 1913, p. 143.
[3] Fernández Guardia, 1918, p. 160.

643 797 648 in the progress and development of his people and of the satisfaction he derived from the visit of Mons. Thiel.[7] The attitude of the government of Nueva Granada in its desire to take over Talamanca and the awareness and interest of the Bishop, awoke the Costa Rican authorities and caused them to establish a farming and military colony called "San Bernardo." This weakened the power of King Antonio and he became more the nominal than active head of the Talamancans.

643 648 [262] The King made various trips to San José. The first took place in 1882, when he visited the "Casa Presidencial" and was invited to dinner by President Fernández. On this occasion he refused to eat the lettuce in the salad and referred to the fact that he wasn't a rabbit. In 1899 and in 1907, he returned to the capital where he gave rise to many more anecdotes filled with picturesque details.[8]

[439] Antonio had a tendency to take the law into his own hands. On more than one occasion, he engaged in smuggling merchandise from Nueva Granada. Other times, he would flare up against the Costa Rican authority in the region, particularly when he had had an excess of liquor. This happened frequently and created difficulties and problems which had much to do with his loss of power and respect. Once it was even said, and not without basis, that he tried to poison the Bishop and other priests.

643 644 Concerning his private life, it is known that he married twice. His first wife was Oleria, the mother of Victoria, Julia, Benito, and Juan Saldaña. By the second wife, Leonor Almengor, he had Julia, Claracín (a boy), Tranquilino, Little Tranquilino, and Ninfa.[9]

[613] King Antonio had three sisters, the eldest of whom was María, mother of José Saldaña. This is important because the lineage is inherited by the feminine side and the King's eldest nephew thus was his legitimate heir. José was distinguished looking, tall, thin, bright, and vain in his dress.[10]

643 King Antonio Saldaña died the third of January, 1910, during the celebration of a

[7] Pérez Zeledón, 1913, pp. 175–76.
[8] Segarra y Julia, 1907, pp. 573–96.
[9] Tristán, 1922, pp. 156–57.
[10] Tristán, 1922, p. 157.